

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson****Markup: “Secure Handling of Ammonium Nitrate Act of 2007”**

April 26, 2007 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the full Committee markup (second meeting) for H.R. 1680, to authorize the Secretary of Homeland Security to regulate the sale of ammonium nitrate to prevent and deter the acquisition of ammonium nitrate by terrorists, the “Secure Handling of Ammonium Nitrate Act of 2007”:

“I feel strongly that this modified language addresses all of the legitimate concerns raised on both sides of the aisle during our April 17th markup.

The amendment we are considering today will require each individual who applies for an ammonium nitrate registration number to have their names run against the terrorist watch list. The terrorist watch list system is not perfect, as I am sure Representative Sanchez can attest.

It’s one thing if a watch list error results in delaying a person at the airport, it’s a whole other thing when it keeps a farmer from accessing ammonium nitrate in the small window where they need to spread it on their land.

This measure now requires an expedited registration and appeals process. DHS is required to follow-up with applicants within 72 hours of submitting all their information. For all appeals, DHS has 72 hours to get back to the applicant and either give them a registration number or communicate that DHS is working to resolve some questions about the application and will have a final answer to them shortly.

The Lungren amendment has also been modified to ensure that appropriate information is collected to reduce the risk of misidentifications, like those that occur with the ‘no fly list’.

Again, I am glad we took the time to step back, so that we can actually move forward with a measure that will add strength and legitimacy to the mission of keeping ammonium nitrate out of the hands of terrorists.”

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